



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

we have reviewed it here at a length that its serious value is far from justifying.

B. W. W.

A NEW CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY.

A CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. By Francis Newton Thorpe. Two volumes. New York: Harper Brothers. 1899.

The title of this book is hardly an adequate index of its contents. No one need look in these volumes for an account of the constitutional development of the federal government or for any treatment of the statute law or judicial decisions pertaining to the juristic domain usually associated with a work of this character. Mr. Thorpe finds the materials for his narrative in other quarters. He thinks that the national consciousness and the progressive growth of American governmental ideals have left their impress most directly and clearly in the series of State constitutions. Here one finds records more closely reflective of the spirit of the people than in the federal Constitution. The commonwealths, as the people responded to different waves of feeling or were forced to harmonize their government with the changed conditions of economic and social life, modified from time to time the fundamental law under which they lived. Apart from this accurate reflection of the ethics of the people one gets, too, in the State constitutions a broader outline of the whole content of the national life than the federal Constitution can ever give. Such is the thesis of the author, and in working it out he can congratulate himself that what he has lost in the matter of verbal accuracy he has gained in the novelty of his subject.

Naturally a subject so vast as this must be placed under certain limitations. It would be impossible in two volumes to summarize the contents and the changes in the successive constitutions of all the commonwealths. It would be almost as difficult to take up all the subjects discussed even in a few of them. There are fields of political energy that he does not touch at all. He confines himself to matters relating to the suffrage, the slavery question, education, the conflicting interests of the town and country populations. In

other words, his treatment of the State constitutions is topical and does not consist in an analysis *in extenso* of the documents themselves. In regard to Mr. Thorpe's method of selection in the choice of the constitutions themselves, he is obliged to limit himself to a study of the newer commonwealths, and refers only by way of illustration to the constitutional history of the Eastern States. Kentucky, California, Michigan, and Louisiana supply most of the material which appears in these pages. Emerging into statehood under conditions far different from those which had surrounded the genesis of their older neighbors, they were forced to deal on an independent basis with problems unfamiliar to their eighteenth century progenitors. And these volumes are filled with their attempts to meet untried difficulties and bear abundant proof of the wonderful vigor and optimism of the democratic type of polity. This energy in meeting or rather in anticipating the demands of an expansive civilization is seen to be a result of the wave of sentiment which transformed the conservative, cautious, and trained statesmanship of the early days of the republic into the exuberant audacity of the Jacksonian epoch. The great party leaders whose names became household words in the thirty or forty years before the civil war would have had little sympathy with the framers of the Constitution. They were separated from them in all that marks off this century from the last. A valuable portion of Mr. Thorpe's work is given up to an analysis of the changes which are typical of these two epochs.

These two volumes present us indeed with only a small fragment of what was being debated and fought out in the arena of politics. But the picture they give is strongly suggestive of these forces to which the extraordinary vitality of the American people is due. When one considers that only a small portion of this vitality could display itself in the records of constitutional conventions it can be seen that Mr. Thorpe has only approached the fringe of a large subject. A vast province composed of the records of State legislatures and the utterances of the public press is still an undiscovered

country; what fruitful and illuminating work lies before the student who analyses their contents! For instance, how can slavery ever be understood by the historian who confines himself to the Supreme Court decisions or the debates of Congress. Behind and beyond these lay the aspirations and convictions of multitudes of people which never found expression there.

It can easily be seen that what Mr. Thorpe has done is a stimulus to further work along the same lines, and should deserve especial recognition for its value in this respect alone. But the volumes have additional merits. As an interpreter of some of the most interesting episodes in our national life their author shows not only patient research but the capacity for wise selection of material and for direct, clear expression in the summary he has made. While he is in no way brilliant in a stylistic sense Mr. Thorpe is to be congratulated for his success in offering to the public a piece of work which is both solid and original.

W. L. B.

“THE STORY OF THE CIVIL WAR.”

THE STORY OF THE CIVIL WAR, a concise account of the war in the United States of America between 1860 and 1865, by John Codman Ropes, LL. D., with maps and plans. Part 2. The Campaigns of 1862. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1898.

This volume in Mr. Ropes' monumental work is characterized in even higher degree than the first by a critical impartiality that makes it one of the most valuable books yet written on the subject. It does not endeavor to give a complete account of all military movements, but examines selected campaigns in detail, and deduces from this examination judgments that are often new, and almost always convincing on the character and ability of the political and military leaders of the opposing forces and peoples, with an array of references that attests on every page the completeness of his mastery of the sources of official information.

Dr. Ropes' judgments of events are likely to find general acceptance. His judgments of character will inevitably provoke more differences of opinion, for here a personal equa-